
Anti-Bullying and Harassment (Students) Policy

Date: March 2022

Next Review: March 2025

1. Preamble

- 1.1. Swan Hill Christian School (SHCS) seeks to provide a Christian environment that is conducive to the personal (spiritual, academic, social, physical and emotional) growth and well-being of students.
- 1.2. Bullying of any description is totally unacceptable at SHCS and will not be tolerated. All SHCS students have the right to feel safe and to be kept safe at school, and it is therefore imperative that each student seeks the best for their classmates. The school is committed to providing a caring and friendly environment for all students so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere, and in the knowledge that they are valued as individuals created in the image of God.
- 1.3. Bullying places the desires of the bully ahead of the feelings and rights of the person being bullied, and ignores the value of the image of God in the victim.
- 1.4. Jesus gave clear instructions about the way people should treat each other, including “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31). The apostle Paul said, “... encourage one another and build each other up ...” (1 Thessalonians 5:11). Matthew 22:34-40 also gives clear instructions about loving others.
- 1.5. This policy relates to all incidents of bullying involving SHCS students occurring during school hours and/or on school premises, and to other incidents of bullying involving SHCS students occurring outside school hours and/or away from school premises where such incidents have adverse implications for an individual’s welfare and/or for relationships within the school

2. Definitions

- 2.1. Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.
- 2.2. Bullying does not include mutual conflict situations (where there is an argument or disagreement but not an imbalance or misuse of power), social rejection or dislike (unless involving deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude, or create dislike for others), single-episode or random acts, and occasions where bullying is genuinely perceived but is not actual.
- 2.3. Harassment is defined as any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) that is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person.
- 2.4. Cyber bullying is a form of bullying, and involves a person being targeted by another through the use of digital technology, mobile communication devices or through the internet (including social networking websites, chat rooms and email), for the purpose of harassment, stalking, threats, conveying sexual innuendo, communicating false pretences, forwarding someone else’s private communication, posting humiliating messages or pictures, or other forms of harmful behaviour.

3. Details

- 3.1. Where incidents of bullying occur at SHCS, victims have the right to expect that such incidents shall be treated seriously and dealt with promptly and effectively according to the terms of this policy and

related procedures. The health and well-being of victims of bullying shall be of paramount importance and all reasonable measures shall be taken to support victims.

- 3.2. In the case of incidents of bullying occurring outside school hours and/or away from school premises, the school will take reasonable action within the limits of its capacity to do so.
- 3.3. Each reported incident of alleged bullying shall be assessed against the definitions provided above, as not all distressing behaviours and socially unpleasant situations are examples of bullying.
- 3.4. Disciplinary measures in relation to proven incidents of bullying shall be determined in accordance with the Student Discipline and Behaviour Policy and other relevant policies, and any related procedures, and may include the suspension or expulsion of students.
- 3.5. Staff, students and other members of the SHCS community are expected to be pro-active against bullying, including promptly reporting incidents of bullying that they become aware of.
- 3.6. As determined by the Principal, staff members shall periodically undertake professional development designed to increase awareness of bullying in schools, to increase their skill and confidence in dealing with bullying, and to enable them to consistently enforce this policy and related procedures.
- 3.7. The Principal shall ensure that specific procedures are consistent with this policy and which establish clear guidelines for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying. Procedures in relation to bullying shall be both preventative (educating appropriately to avoid incidents of bullying) and interventionist (acting appropriately as a response to incidents of bullying). Any procedural documents shall elaborate on the different forms of bullying and give examples of what bullying is and what it is not.
- 3.8. The Principal shall ensure that a Student Code of Conduct consistent with this and other related policies is developed, in consultation with both staff and students, and subsequently implemented. Such document shall identify goals and standards for student behaviour, and include safe school and specific anti-bullying strategies that aim to promote positive student behaviour, prevent anti-social behaviour, and encourage respect, compassion and cooperation.
- 3.9. The Principal shall ensure that the school is proactive in communicating its policy in relation to bullying to all members of the school community, and that parents are informed about how to detect signs of possible bullying in their children.
- 3.10. The Principal shall ensure that teaching in relation to bullying is included in selected areas of the curriculum.
- 3.11. In addition to this policy, reference should also be made to other related policies; including *Electronic Communications and Information Technology Policy* and *Student Discipline and Behaviour Policy*.